

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As you finalize discussions on the next stimulus package, one item that is critical in ensuring that the American public, our nation's workers and our nation's economy can return to a new normal as soon as possible is the need for a robust plan of action for testing and contact tracing. In order to achieve this goal, we need an investment of \$250 billion in funding so that Americans can return to work as safely as possible, and to avert a second wave of outbreaks in the U.S., which would wreak further havoc on our nation's economy.

While we have made some gains in our nation's testing capacity, with numbers now at 1.6 million diagnostic tests per week, health care experts say we are still woefully short of the estimated 30 million tests per week needed.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this administration has failed to develop a national action plan, and it is therefore incumbent on Congress to provide the funds needed to execute this national testing strategy.

Testing is the number one way to give us an objective, data-driven assessment of where we stand in our fight against this virus.<sup>2</sup> Additional measures like contact tracing will allow us to identify additional cases and provide health care workers and impacted patients with the information they need to properly respond by isolating and quarantining those individuals sick with the virus.<sup>3</sup> By executing a robust, proactive response effort, we can stifle further outbreaks.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TheRockefellerFoundation\\_WhitePaper\\_Covid19\\_4\\_22\\_2020.pdf](https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TheRockefellerFoundation_WhitePaper_Covid19_4_22_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ethics.harvard.edu/files/center-for-ethics/files/roadmaptopandemicresilience\\_updated\\_4.20.20\\_1.pdf](https://ethics.harvard.edu/files/center-for-ethics/files/roadmaptopandemicresilience_updated_4.20.20_1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/healthcare/news/2020/04/03/482613/national-state-plan-end-coronavirus-crisis/>

As we have seen, essential workers and seniors are bearing the brunt of the impact of this virus, while minority communities have been disproportionately affected.<sup>4,5</sup> Our health care, food and agriculture, law enforcement and first responders are doing the critical work needed to keep our nation safe and fed. We must keep these critical workers safe as well. Priority should, therefore, be given to health care workers on the frontlines, law enforcement, minority communities, seniors and food and agriculture workers as well as those showing symptoms. As more tests become available, we can expand the pool of individuals being tested.

While there have been some calls to reopen the American economy now, the vast majority of the American public recognizes that we must do this in an orderly and safe manner.<sup>6</sup> Americans must feel a sense of security that local, state and federal entities, as well as public health officials, feel confident in reopening our economy. A robust plan of action for testing and contact tracing will provide that sense of security, as well as the vital data and information we need so that our nation and economy can begin to heal and recover from this devastating virus.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/occupations-highest-covid19-risk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-policy-watch/growing-data-underscore-communities-color-harder-hit-covid-19/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/23/poll-majority-americans-important-to-stay-home-than-return-to-work-203427>